1: Holmberg--38 [5] (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
116, 273, 527, 533, 152

"As a drinking feast progresses, the Siriono, who is a very uncommunicative fellow when sober, becomes an animated conversationalist, a performer, and a braggart. At the opening of the bout the talk usually turns to the merits of the liquor. One of my more poetic informants, Erésa-eánta (Strong-eyes), used to say, in describing the liquor at the start of almost every drinking feast: 'Yesterday it was without force, like water or like earth, but today it has great strength.' As the effects of the drinking and the smoking begin to be felt, one or more of the participants breaks out in song, usually impromptu and related to some exploit of which he is particularly proud, such as the killing of a tapir or a harpy eagle. Another may be engaged in discussing the desirability of looking for a new wife (always a young one or yukwáki) or of casting out the shrew he now has. As the mood gets mellower everyone joins the singing, and when the party has reached an advanced stage almost everyone is singing a different tune at the same time.

While attending these drinking feasts, I tried my best to record a number of these songs, but I was never able to set down more than snatches of them because of the bedlam and the darkness existing at the time. Moreover, since most of the participants, following a drinking bout, were victims of alcoholic amnesia, brutal hangovers, and high anxieties, it was impossible to get much cooperation from them in this matter later."

1: Holmberg--39 [4] (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
116, 273, 527, 533, 562

"Like the men, the women too have their drinking feasts, but these do not usually terminate as roughly as those of the men. In five of these feasts which I observed, singing was the prominent feature apart from the drinking and smoking. Although the women accused each other of having had sexual relations with one another's husbands, most of them had reached such an intoxicated condition by the time these accusations were made that they were placed in their hammocks to sleep it off.

In only one instance did I observe mixed drinking. This involved three old women and their husbands and brothers. On this occasion, however, only a few calabashes of mead were available, and the party was not organized in any way."

1: Holmberg--44 [2] (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
116, 533

"What has been said of art can also be said of the instrumental aspect of music. Not a single type of musical instrument is known. Not even such rhythm-beating instruments as rattles or clappers are employed, nor is anything ever hung on the body to make noise to accompany singing or dancing. All music, in fact, is vocal. Singing does, however, play an important role in the culture."

1: Holmberg--44 [3] (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
116, 512, 533

"Early morning singing, which makes it impossible for anyone to sleep after it starts, is a definite part of each day's routine, especially when the group is settled for any length of time as they were at Tibaera. Even on the march, or when a man is out alone with his family, this practice is followed. Everyone sings. The songs are monotonous, impromptu chants, which sometimes have reference to some aspect of the food quest. From some distance away, the early morning chorus sounds not unlike a group of howler monkeys heralding the day from the top of some distant tree."

1: Holmberg--44 [4] (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
116, 533, 123, 825

"When I was first with the Indians I forced myself to leave a comfortable hammock and mosquito net many times at about 3 a.m., and, with flashlight, pencil, and notebook in hand, I made a sincere effort to record some of this early morning music. After a series of unrewarding attempts, however, and under extremely unpleasant conditions, I allowed the Indians to greet the day without the nuisance of my presence. My informants all told me, however, that the songs had no meaning, and, as far as the words were concerned, I am inclined to believe that this is true. In discussing the question with Abraham Richards, the son of an American cattle rancher who was born and raised with a group of Siriono on his father's cattle ranch near El Carmen, he told me that he, also, was never able to make any sense out of these early morning songs. However that may be, on inquiring of informants as to why they always greeted the day with songs, one of two reasons was always given: either they were happy or they were like the birds ('Hadn't I noticed that most of the birds and some of the animals greeted the day with song?'). Singing in the morning thus may perform the function not only of pleasantly filling in the period between darkness and dawn, after sufficient sleep has been obtained and before the activities of the day begin, but also of reinforcing the bonds maintained with the animal world."

1: Holmberg--44 [5] (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
116, 273, 533

"The importance of singing at drinking feasts has already been stressed. The songs sung at this time, like those sung in the early morning, are largely impromptu. To record them without instruments is next to an impossibility, because the singers are drunk and mouth their words more than usual. Insofar as I was able to determine, however, they are stylized only as to form and rhythm and never as to content. Informants said that when drunk they sang whatever rhythmical combinations came into their heads."

1: Holmberg--44 [6] (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
116, 517, 535, 533, 776

"The most meaningful songs seem to be those that are sung in connection with the dance. Dancing (yurúki) is always accompanied by singing (hidási dási) and is a very common way of passing parts of the long tropical nights especially when the moon is shining. Group dancing is rarely indulged in during the day or on nights when the moon is dark. On such nights a fear of evil spirits keeps the Indian close to his hammock."

1: Holmberg--45 (1941-42) 1950 Siriono-1-3
116, 535, 533

"Following the formation of the circle the dancing and singing begin. The participants throw back their heads and stamp their feet alternately up and down firmly to the rhythm of the music. The circle itself remains stationary during the first phase of the dance. When the dance begins, the beats of the feet are coordinated with the accented syllables of the following song, which is sung in unison:

híto híto híto híto
ti su á ča
yí sa dí mosé
á tí ba tí i čá
ai i ča
mimbá mimbá

This song is always sung at the opening of a dance, whether it be men or women that are dancing, but I was unable to get a translation of it. All of my informants told me that the song was meaningless, but it does contain some meaningful words, such as yisádi mosé ('when dancing') and the expression híto which probably here means 'happy.' This suggests that part of the song, at least, means something like 'I am happy when I dance.'

During the first phase of the dance, the song quoted above is sung over and over again in unison about 25 times, by which time a considerable emotional enthusiasm has taken hold of the group. After a brief rest, the second phase of the dance begins, also by

everyone singing a song in unison. Some verses of this song are quoted below:

áh áh áh áh áh
sán de ra čá
tá du bá
múndu
čú du ǰá há

nde ra ǰa nendá
ta míNge
múndu
čú du ǰá há

ai sai ibí ató
ai sai ibí ató
íbi kwa
kú ru kwá ta
ki a tá

1: Holmberg--45 (1941-42) 1950 Siriono-3
116, 535, 533

ai sai ibí a ǰú du
mun du bá
a túru bá
múndu
čú du ǰá há

Although the above song contains certain meaningful words, a translation is impossible because it seems to follow no grammatical pattern. After a number of verses have been sung over and over again to the accompaniment of stamping feet, a leader takes charge of a circle and the singing becomes impromptu. During this phase of the dance, in addition to the stamping of feet, the entire circle of dancers moves round and round counterclockwise, the participants bending their heads downward so as to hear the words of the leader. As he chants a phrase the participants repeat it after him. His phrases often bear on some exploit in hunting or on some event in his life of which he is particularly proud. One moonlight night, for example, Yiknándu (Father of Owl-monkey) chanted for 2 hours about how he had killed tapirs and jaguars; on another, Erésa-eánta (Strong-eyes) sang for as long a time about how he and his brother killed a white man years ago during the last rubber boom. Since these songs are impromptu and are sung only during a dance, it is impossible to record more than snatches of them without technical equipment, which I did not possess. Nor did my knowledge of the language ever reach a point where I could understand them fully."

4: Ryden--101 (1939) 1941 Siriono
116, 177, 534

"The Siriono--at all events those of Casarabe--do not seem to possess any musical instruments. It is true that they possessed a bamboo flute--with four finger-holes, and side-blown--but this they have obtained from the white settlers. Their name for it was takua."